

Town Meeting Coordinating Committee

Meeting of Monday, November 29, 2010

Bangs Community Center, Room 101

Attendance: Peggy Roberts, Nonny Burack, Rob Crowner, Adrienne Terrizzi, Mary Streeter; absent: Harry Brooks, Carol Gray.

1. Call to order: Peggy calls the meeting to order at 4:07pm.

2. Review of Fall TMCC events:

Warrant review: The warrant review was rebroadcast on ACTV many times, but the promotional slides advertising precinct meetings never ran, as far as is known. The committee discusses the changing status of ACTV and its relationship to the town. In particular, the committee considers whether it has any leverage to request the addition of other board and committee meetings to the coverage contract. ACTV staffing relies on college interns, who are not always available throughout the year, so a partnership with the high school might be a new source of volunteers.

Some people have difficulty hearing speakers in the Town Room. The room is equipped with assistive hearing devices, but they seem never to be made available. Possible solutions include internal amplification of speakers or improvements to room acoustics.

The evaluation response rate was disappointing (only six out of forty or so in attendance). Adrienne suggests revising the evaluation form to include checklists in addition to questions seeking comment. Not all of the questions on the current version of the form remain relevant or necessary. Mary suggests including a survey in the Spring mailing, which can help inform members about the opportunities for education that are available in addition to generating feedback about them.

Precinct meetings: The committee discusses how to improve turnout at precinct meetings. Suggestions include asking the new *Amherst Bulletin* editor to publish information, postcard mailings, posters, the senior newsletter, the LWV newsletter, and reporting by the Select Board liaison. Returning to individual precinct meetings rather than combined meetings might serve to draw neighbors in addition to Town Meeting members. Mary proposes a midwinter forum about town government in general, which might assist in recruiting new candidates, and Adrienne suggests Isaac Ben Ezra's "Conversations" program on ACTV. However, Peggy points out that the aim should be to reach a diverse population beyond the "usual suspects".

Future precinct meetings held at Wildwood School should be moved out of the cafeteria to a place more comfortable for adults.

3. Electronic voting: Mary notes that the potential IT department request for funding for an electronic voting system may be just to secure a place in the queue, not necessarily to make a purchase next year. Following discussion about whether further research or debate is necessary, the committee agrees to vote on a recommendation at its next meeting, provided all available members are able to attend. There was no feedback from Town Meeting members on the committee's Fall report.

4. Spring calendar planning: The committee agrees to schedule the warrant review for Tuesday, April 12, with Thursday, April 14 as an alternate date. Nonny will reserve the Town Room beginning at 6:30 in order to have time for new member orientation, though the committee discusses handling orientation differently this Spring: on a different day, hosted by someone other than the Moderator (in the past, orientation was conducted by the LWV), or by airing a taped presentation. Ultimately, the committee decides to ask precinct leaders to conduct orientation sessions prior to their precinct meetings as an experiment.

Precinct meetings will be held the last week of April. The bus tour will take place on Sunday, May 1 ☐ the day before the first night of Town Meeting, which may render the practice of filming the bus tour for broadcast on ACTV moot.

The committee begins discussing a Spring informational forum. Preliminary ideas and contacts for a forum on green initiatives was assembled by Carol last Summer. Peggy notes that the LWV is planning a sustainability event in the Spring, which may provide an opportunity for collaboration.

5. Upcoming meetings: The committee agrees to meet on Monday, December 13, or, if more convenient for the Town Manager, Tuesday, December 14. Items for discussion include: reserving rooms, ACTV, and Town Room acoustics.

6. Minutes: Tabled until next meeting.

7. Adjournment: The meeting is adjourned at 6:07pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Crowner

Documents provided:

1. agenda
2. compiled responses to TMCC event evaluation forms
3. blank Spring calendar
4. Spring TM schedule